

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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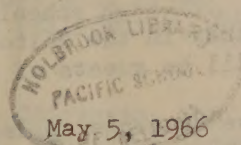
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"CROSSROADS TOKYO" A MEETING-PLACE FOR WORLD CHRISTIAN LEADERS	1
KOREAN CHRISTIAN NURSES SERVE IN JAPANESE HOSPITAL	2
ANGLICAN, LUTHERAN AND KYODAN YOUNGSTERS TO VISIT IN THE UNITED STATES	2
JAPAN'S FIRST "SKYSCRAPER" CHURCH ATTRACTS OSAKA COMMUTERS	2
KYODAN DELEGATION TO ATTEND LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE AT TAIPEI	3
NEIGHBORHOOD POLL REVEALS SCOPE OF RELIGIOUS INTEREST	3
LINES FOR THE LAYOUT MAN	4

"CROSSROADS TOKYO" A MEETING-PLACE FOR WORLD CHRISTIAN LEADERS

"Crossroads Tokyo" measured up to its reputation last month as local churchmen greeted an influx of distinguished guests.

Among world Christian figures to reach the capital in this "spring wave" was Dr. Martin Niemoeller, who landed in Japan on April 24. Dr. Niemoeller will lecture three weeks in the country under auspices of an interdenominational committee. He was welcomed at a reception held on April 25 at Christian Center, The Ginza.

Shortly before Dr. Niemoeller's arrival Japan greeted a delegation of Indonesian church leaders, among the first official representatives of Indonesia's 8-million Protestants to travel abroad since the abortive coup d' etat of last autumn. In the delegation were Dr. Simon Marantika, general secretary of the Dewan Geredja Geredja di Indonesia (The Indonesian Council of Churches), General (Ret.) L. Simatupang, and Peter Luthuihamallo. The three continued on to the USA after a reception given at Tokyo's International House by officials of the United Church of Christ in Japan and by the National Christian Council of Japan. General Simatupang will return to Japan on May 18-25 to attend a week-long conference on Christians In Industry to be sponsored at Kyoto by the East Asia Christian Conference.

The Rev. Greenfield Kiel, general secretary of the Korean National Christian Council also visited in Tokyo on May 3-6. During his visit Dr. Kiel chatted with officials of the Korean Christian Church in Japan and with The Rev. Chuzo Yamada, general secretary of Japan's National Christian Council. On May 6 Dr. Yamada and the NCC's executive committee entertained Dr. Kiel at a reception.

KOREAN CHRISTIAN NURSES SERVE IN JAPANESE HOSPITAL

A group of nineteen Christian nurses from Korea have begun work at Seirei Hamamatsu Hospital, a Shizuoka institution belonging to the Kyodan related Christian Social Work League.

The Korean nurses were brought to this country through the good offices of Tamotsu Hasehawa, a socialist member of Japan's Diet (Parliament) who is a Christian. Besides alleviating a critical shortage of nursing help in Hamamatsu Hospital, the coming of the Korean nurses is seen as an attempt to help raise the prestige of the nursing profession in Japan.

ANGLICAN, LUTHERAN AND KYODAN YOUNGSTERS TO VISIT IN THE UNITED STATES

Eleven high school students will depart from Japan on July 6 to begin a year of study in the United States. During their stay in America the Japanese young people will be guests of Protestant families in widely scattered areas of the country.

The students, selected from among 103,960 youngsters studying in Protestant high schools of Japan, will make their journey under the auspices of International Christian Youth Exchange, an agency of the World Council of Churches. The Japanese group is comprised of eight girls and three boys ranging from 16 to 18 years of age. They are members of Japan's Anglican, Lutheran and United Church of Christ (Kyodan) communions.

Four American students will come to Japan in a reverse flow under the Christian Youth Exchange program.

JAPAN'S FIRST "SKYSCRAPER" CHURCH ATTRACTS OSAKA COMMUTERS

High above Osaka's busy streets the cross of Japan's first "skyscraper church" signals its presence to commuters and city dwellers. The East Umeda congregation of the United Church of Christ in Japan meets atop a nine-story office building erected by the Christian group on a site only ten minute's walk from Osaka station.

During the Second World War the Osaka East Methodist congregation merged with three smaller local churches to become a congregation of the United Church of Christ, the union of denominations formed by Japanese Christians with government encouragement early in the conflict. The church's sanctuary was destroyed in the bombing.

After the war the East Umeda congregation erected a temporary church structure, but lacked assets to construct a church which would adequately capitalize upon the valuable down-town property it held. For a brief period members of the church debated moving to the suburbs, ultimately rejecting the suggestion as a desertion of their inner-city responsibilities.

Six years ago the congregation called a vigorous young minister, The Rev. Katsuo Seno, as its pastor. Under his leadership the church decided to erect an office building, place the church on the top floor, and finance the enterprise through the rental of office space on lower floors. The structure which was built cost \$1,200,000 a large amount in Japan, and now attracts substantial business enterprises to well-lighted and attractive office suites.

The entire ninth floor and two rooms on the floor below are dedicated to church use. The sanctuary seats 200; an assembly hall, church school and club rooms serve additional numbers. With a membership of 300, the church operates a full program including mid-week prayer meeting, women's and men's groups, a young peoples' union, and university discussion circles. Once a week a service is held

at noon at a room in Osaka's nearby Dojima district, and a second midday meeting is scheduled to begin for office employees of the church-owned building.

Osaka station, the nearby terminus, serves millions of travellers entering Osaka on national and underground railway lines and on interurban buses: Department stores, luxury hotels and other office buildings jam the East Umeda district.

KYODAN DELEGATION TO ATTEND LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE AT TAIPEI

Five Christian educators of the United Church of Christ will attend a month-long Seminar For Leadership Development beginning June 1 at Taipei. Sponsored by the Methodist Interboard Committee for Christian Education, the seminar will bring together Christian education scholars from Korea, Singapore, The Philippines, Japan and Taiwan.

Among Japanese churchmen selected to make the trip are Tatsumasa Shirakawa, the Secretary for Christian Education of the United Church of Christ, and Akira Imahashi, Chairman of the denomination's Teaching Materials Commission. Miss Doris Schneider, missionary member of the Kyodan's Christian Education Committee also will make the trip.

NEIGHBORHOOD POLL REVEALS SCOPE OF RELIGIOUS INTEREST

The mass-readership newspaper Mainichi Shimbun recently reported the results of neighborhood polls taken by three Christian churches of the Tokyo area. The polls indicate interest in Christianity is only moderate in some neighborhoods.

When members of Takanawa, Shinagawa and Oimachi congregations of the United Church of Christ (Kyodan) asked their non-Christian neighbors whether they knew of the Church's existence they received "Yes" answers from 76.6 per cent of those interviewed. But when Christians asked whether their neighbors felt a desire to visit a church--any church-- they were given firm "No's" by 55.8 per cent and expressions of interest by only 21.8 per cent. Forty-two per cent of individuals contacted had attended church at least once previously, however.

Asked the more general question, "Do you want to know about Christianity", only 85 of 320 persons interviewed answered "Yes". Twenty-six per cent admitted to having a Bible in their homes. More than 75 per cent denied faith in any religion.

LINES FOR THE LAYOUT MAN

American Southern Baptists now have 137 missionaries in Japan, with two additional couples expected in August.

* * * *

Japanese, Canadian and American pastors will mount a six week cooperative evangelistic effort in northern Honshu this summer. The Interboard Committee for Christian Work in Japan, a New York organization, acts as clearing house for the North American pastors arriving in Japan in mid-June to join their colleagues of the United Church of Christ in an extended program of visitation evangelism.

* * * *

The Japan Christian Council for Peace in Vietnam continues its dialogue on the Vietnam problem with the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. The latest Japanese contribution toward American thought on the subject--the Japan Council for Peace statement of February 25--has been circulated to member churches of the NCCC-USA and to the interchurch group's International Affairs Commission. R.H. Edwin Espy, General Secretary of the NCCC-USA, has assured the Japanese group that his organization "deeply appreciates continued communication and discussion of such issues".

* * * *

About one million thirty two thousand dollars have been asked from American and Canadian denominations joining in the Interboard Committee for Christian Work in Japan to help support institutions and projects of the United Church of Christ in Japan during 1967. The Interboard Committee also serves as the administrative organization through which approximately 380 missionaries are assigned to serve the United Church.

Sayonara from Tokyo !

LETTER FOR THE LAYOUT MAN

Dear Mr. [Name], I have just received your letter of the 15th and am glad to hear that you are well. I am also well and hope this letter finds you the same. I am looking forward to seeing you when you come to the States.

Yours truly,
[Name]
[Address]